

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAN JO 00960 282231Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-03 SS-15 CA-01 CIAE-00 INR-10
NSAE-00 NSC-05 JUSE-00 SEC-01 /050 W
-----067659 010429Z /64

R 282210Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0357
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

UNCLAS SAN JOSE 0960

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, CS
SUBJ: ANTI-VESCO CITIZENSHIP MEETING

REF: SAN JOSE 0940

1. 4,000-5,000 COSTA RICAFB FILLED A COVERED MEETING IN AREA IN SAN JOSE TO OVERFLOW EVENING FEB 27 FOR A PEACEFUL PROTEST AGAINST CITIZEN-SHIP APPLICATION OF ROBERT VESCO. LARGELY MIDDLE CLASS CROWD, MANY OF THEM WITH FAMILIES, COVERED BROAD POLITICAL SPECTRUM; PROMINENT ON SPEAKERS' PLATFORM IN ADDITION TO OPPOSITION LEADERS WERE GOVERNMENT PARTY PLN PERSONALITIES SUCH AS EX-VICE PRESIDENT JORGE ROSSI, EX-MINISTER OF CULTURE CARMEN NARANJO, AND EX-DEPUTY JORGE VOLIO. MEETING WAS CAREFULLY PLANNED AS A NON-PARTISAN COSTA RICAN AFFAIR; ONLY THE NATIONAL COLORS AND FLAGS WERE FLOWN. IT WAS ORDERLY, RELATIVELY SHORT, AND IT BROKE UP QUICKLY AFTER THE SPEECHES AND THE MUSIC.

2. THERE WERE TWO SPEECHES, ONE BY EX-VICE PRESIDENT ROSSI, JOSE FIGURES' FIRST VICE PRESIDENT DURING HIS 1970-74 TERM, AND THE SECOND BY PRESIDENT-ELECT CARAZO. BOTH DWELT ON THE LEGAL AND THE UNCLASSIFIED

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MORAL ASPECTS OF VESCO'S PRESENCE IN COSTA RICA. ROSSI IN PARTICULAR NOTED THAT SUCH A CIVIC MEETING OF COSTA RICAN CITIZENS COULD NOT BE CONSIDERED A PRESSURE TACTIC ON COSTA RICAN AUTHORITIES CHARGED WITH DECIDING ON VESCO'S CITIZENSHIP APPLICATION. CARAZO'S SPEECH WAS A MEASURED EXPLANATION OF WHY AND HOW VESCO'S PRESENCE WAS AN INSULT TO COSTA RICA'S NATIONAL DIGNITY. AT THE END OF THE MEETING MANY PARTICIPANTS SIGNED ANTI-VESCO CITIZENSHIP DECLARATIONS

FOR PRESENTATION TO THE CIVIL REGISTRY.

3. IN OTHER DEVELOPMENTS, THE PROCURADOR GENERAL, LOCAL EQUIVALENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (AG), HAS PRESENTED A NUMBER OF LEGAL OBJECTIONS TO VESCO'S APPLICATION TO THE CIVIL REGISTRY. THE AG'S OFFICE CONSIDERS THE APPLICATION DEFICIENT IN A NUMBER OF TECHNICAL WAYS, AND NOTES CRITICALLY THAT BECAUSE OF VESCO'S DECLARED ECONOMIC DEPENDENCY ON HIS WIFE, THERE IS NEED FOR ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL SOLVENCY EVIDENCE FROM MRS VESCO.

4. KEY OPPOSITION AND PLN DEPUTIES AGREED IN THE ASSEMBLY FEB 27 TO A NEW DRAFT MOTION OF PROTEST TO VESCO'S CITIZENSHIP BID. IT SHOULD BE VOTED AND PROBABLY PASSED ON FEB 28.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETINGS, CITIZENSHIP STATUS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978SANJO00960
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780093-0194
Format: TEL
From: SAN JOSE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978023/aaaaacdc.tel
Line Count: 76
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 88b3b7d2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 SAN JOSE 940
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3526492
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ANTI-VESCO CITIZENSHIP MEETING
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, CS, US, (VESCO, ROBERT L)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/88b3b7d2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014